

What They Are Saying: The Trump-Putin Meeting Was a Disgrace and Makes America Less Safe

Yesterday, the world witnessed the President of the United States side with Russian dictator Vladimir Putin over America's intelligence community, which has confirmed that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections. Instead of standing with the intelligence community, Congressional Republicans continue to put party over country and have failed to take meaningful action to rebuke the President's actions or bring legislation to the Floor to protect Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's attempts to subvert our democracy.

National security officials are speaking out about how President Trump's comments make America less safe:

Former CIA Director John Brennan: "Donald Trump's press conference performance in Helsinki rises to and exceeds the threshold of 'high crimes and misdemeanors.' It was nothing short of treasonous. Not only were Trump's comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin. Republican Patriots: Where are you???" [Twitter, [7/16/18](#)]

Former Defense Secretary Ash Carter: "In my almost 4 decades with national defense starting in the Pentagon under... Reagan, I never saw or imagined so uneven a handover of American security interests and principles with nothing in return at a meeting. It was like watching the destruction of a cathedral." [Twitter, [7/16/18](#)]

Former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns: "The big takeaway from Helsinki. Trump's weakness beside Putin. There is nothing close to this in Presidential history. President Trump sided with Putin against our intelligence community on an attack against the U.S. Dereliction of duty." [Twitter, [7/16/18](#)]

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper: "On the world's stage, in front of the entire globe, the President of the United States essentially capitulated and seems intimidated by Vladimir Putin. So it was amazing and very, very disturbing." [CNN, [7/16/18](#)]

Former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel: "This was not a golf outing. This was not a real estate transactional kind of arrangement. ... Engagement must be connected to a strategic interest, a strategic purpose. I don't know what that strategic purpose was. I am now convinced we didn't have one... a sad day for America... a sad day for the world." [CNN, [7/16/18](#)]

Former CIA Assistant Director Mark M. Lowenthal: "Mr. Trump's performance on Monday was 'just beyond the pale,' Mr. Lowenthal said. 'He's the best president that Russia's ever had,' Mr. Lowenthal added." [New York Times, [7/16/18](#)]

Retired Four Star General Barry R. McCaffrey: "Worst day ever in an American presidency.... Putin-Trump Summit bizarre performance. Trump near babble. Illogical. Confused. Putin a murderous brute in control. We are in trouble. Congress needs serious intervention. Mueller probe needs to be out in public for all Americans to read every word." [Twitter, [7/16/18](#)]

Former CIA Director Michael V. Hayden: "Mr. Hayden said the president's 'departure point for speech and thought is not objective reality.'" [New York Times, [7/16/18](#)]

Former Counselor at U.S. Department of State Eliot A. Cohen: "The word treason is so strong that we must use it carefully. But that press conference has brought the President of the United States right up to that dark, dark shore." [Twitter, [7/16/18](#)]

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 7/17/2018

Editorial boards are also speaking out against President Trump's refusal to stand up for America:

Washington Post Editorial: [Trump just colluded with Russia. Openly.](#)

“The enduring image of the U.S.-Russia summit in Helsinki on Monday will be that of President Trump standing next to Vladimir Putin and suggesting he found Mr. Putin’s ‘powerful’ denial at least as persuasive as the U.S. intelligence community’s unanimous finding that Russia intervened in the 2016 election. Coupled with another groundless attack on the FBI and an apparent endorsement of a patently disingenuous offer by Mr. Putin to collaborate with the investigation of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, Mr. Trump appeared to align himself with the Kremlin against American law enforcement before the Russian ruler and a global audience... While Mr. Trump’s insistence on granting Mr. Putin that status was misguided, it paled beside his betrayal of the FBI and his own senior intelligence officials... In Helsinki, Mr. Trump again insisted ‘there was no collusion’ with Russia. Yet in refusing to acknowledge the plain facts about Russia’s behavior, while trashing his own country’s justice system, Mr. Trump in fact was openly colluding with the criminal leader of a hostile power.” [7/16/18]

USA Today Editorial: [Trump is treading dangerous ground in excusing Russian aggression during the U.S. election](#)

“America witnessed an astonishing event from Helsinki on Monday. President Donald Trump stood beside an adversary of the United States — someone who ordered a cyber and disinformation attack on the American 2016 presidential election in clear violation of U.S. sovereignty — and seemed to take our adversary's side... Why does Trump cling to falsehoods that are so convenient to the Kremlin? ... All presidents up until now have understood deep in their bones which side they’re on. Whatever happens with Robert Mueller’s investigation, Trump now has Americans wondering where his interests lie, and that’s an indictment in itself.” [7/16/18]

New York Times Editorial: [Why Won't Donald Trump Speak for America?](#)

“The spectacle was hard to fathom: Mr. Trump, standing just inches from an autocratic thug who steals territory and has his adversaries murdered, undermined the unanimous conclusion of his own intelligence and law enforcement agencies that the Russian government interfered with the 2016 election with the goal of helping Mr. Trump win... It remains a mystery why the president, unlike any of his Republican or Democratic predecessors, is unwilling to call out Russian perfidy. He has no trouble throwing his weight around when he is in the company of America’s European allies, attacking them as deadbeats and the European Union as a ‘foe,’ or when he excoriates the news media as ‘enemies of the people.’ Put him next to Mr. Putin and other dictators, and he turns to putty. All that’s clear is that a president who is way out of his depth is getting America into deep trouble.” [7/16/18]

Chicago Tribune Editorial: [Trump dances to Putin's choreography](#)

“...[A]t a news conference following the meeting with Putin, Trump not only came across mealy-mouthed, he expressed doubt about his own intelligence community’s findings about Russia’s involvement in meddling in the presidential campaign.... The risk is real, Mr. President, and it’s ominous. At the core of Putin’s playbook is this credo: If the subterfuge works, then use it again. Failing to see the peril in Putin’s ways endangers America and its allies.” [7/16/18]